**Conversation Guide for GIBCT Profile Page Testing**

**P2 - Aiku**

**Intro - 5 minutes**

Thanks for joining us today! My name is Jen and I also have some colleagues on the line observing and taking notes. Today we're going to talk about discovering information about schools on the GI Bill Comparison Tool.

Have you done usability testing before?

If No – I’m going to put a couple scenarios in front of you and ask you to do some tasks on a website we’re working on. As you’re going through the tasks, we ask if you can “think aloud” – tell us what you’re seeing, what you’re looking for and any other thoughts that come to mind as you’re interacting with the site.

Before we start, a few things I want to mention:

* **This entire session should take about 45 minutes.** I do want to be respectful of your time, so I may occasionally prompt you with the next question or topic.
* **In this session, we want to hear your honest opinions.** We are not testing your ability. We just want to improve these tools to better meet Veteran's needs. I will not be offended by any opinions you express, and I welcome your feedback.
* **If for any reason and at any time you want to stop the session, please let me know.**
* **Are you comfortable if I record my screen and audio as we talk today?** We use the recordings just to make sure that we captured your opinions accurately. After that, the recordings are destroyed - usually within a week or two.
  + If yes: **Once I start recording, I am going to confirm that you are ok with me recording this session once more.**

*Start recording.*

* **I have started recording**. I'd like to confirm: Are you comfortable if I record my screen and the audio as we talk today?

**Warm-up Questions - 5 minutes**

Before we look at the website, let’s start with a few warm-up questions.

* What is your military status (e.g. Veteran, child, spouse)? Veteran
  + If Veteran, which branch of service? Navy
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits? Yes
  + If yes, which benefit are you using? When did you start school? I used MGIB, Post 9/11 and now using VR&E. I started Aug 2012 and took a break in 2020 and restarted with VR&E in June. Finance
  + If no, do you plan on using your benefits in the near future? - Which benefit? Where are you in the school selection process?
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? Yes
  + If yes, what did you use it for? I used it to compare the MGIB and Post 9/11 when went to augusta tech to see which one would benefit me more and ended up

**Initial Take - 2 minutes**

I’m going to start sharing my screen.

This is the GI Bill Comparison Tool, which allows you to see what education benefits you can receive at various institutions. Do you have any initial thoughts or questions before we get started?

**First Task: Notre Dame - 15 minutes**

You've been interested in going back to school. A friend of yours recommended **University of Notre Dame** in **Notre Dame, Indiana** to you. How would you use the Comparison Tool to determine if **University of Notre Dame** would be a good fit for you?

If I know the name of the school, I’d search by name since I think that would be easier. I would type in University of Notre Dame into the box…autocomplete…I am confused on why there are 3…I would pick the first because I would assume it’s the main campus and the other are graduate schools or medical schools. Looks like all 3 of them popped up. Oh I see, it’s in multiple states. I would choose this one because its in Indiana. Clicked Name…For that, I’m wondering why that came up first, because I notice its not alphabetical.

So I know whenever I’m looking these are important to me – size, location, private or public…4 year college or not. It’ll determine the degrees and cost. Private schools cost more. Accreditation matters because if I want to transfer…if its not accredited, it might not count. I like things to be a little bit bigger…something a little more bustling. And urban location means a lot more activity and a lot more people. Knowing the number of GI Bill students are there is a sign of how Veteran friendly a school is. I would definitely go here (EYB) to see which benefit would be the most beneficial…I assume it would be the 9/11, but I’d want to check the others to make sure. I’m not eligible for Select Reserve or Dependents. Putting in options for different GI Bill benefits. What would be helpful here would be a Learn more….looking at these, it looks like VR&E and Post 9/11 options would be best. Have a link explaining why this matters or a link to see eligibility. Its nice to see that it has Yellow ribbon program…interesting, I do like that it has all of this. I’ve always been interested in the tuition policy, if you’re out of state it may change…I haven’t had any problems with the late VA payments, but its good to know. Getting started ith benefits…I think should be up here in this question (military status). I think it’s a little general. But I guess that would be tricky to isolate. I like this section because you don’t have to go to another VA website to get all of this. It’s good to see the cautionary information – I know some of schools are flagged. I think its good to see that this school doesn’t have any problems with that. Good to see the school locations – if you live in Fort Wayne…or Chicago….Link – I would expect it to be a different school and its in a different state. Since all the other ones are in Indiana…and this one has a different URL I think I would assume it’s a different school for some reason.

Academics, this is good to know as well…CareerScope, oh this is great. I think this is new. From what I can remember, it seems like there are quite a few new sections or the sections are more detailed. I do remember the complaints beign there. I don’t remember the school location or the academics. I think the careerscope is a great tool. Veterans get out and don’t know what we want to do – so I think its great to have this here to figure out which way we want to go. I like this Veteran programs and support. Yep, this is good to know. For me, this historical information I wouldn’t know what to do with it. I don’t know if I would really care about that too much. Contact information is nice to know…yeah, this is all great too, even though for the SCOs…I know sometimes they’ll have a Veterans website, it would be nice to link that here or have emails for school certifiying officials. Institution codes – I think that might be for FAFSA purposes.

**Things to watch for:**

* What type(s) of search does the user conduct?
* Does the user notice the jumplinks?
* Does the user click the jumplinks?
* Does the user notice the Compare functionality?
* Does the user notice the religious affiliation in the heading?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went? I think it went really well, I’m leaving with very few questions and if I do have questions, there are ways for me on this page to link to answers. I like the layout, it’s not too much at once. It doesn’t feel cluttered. It just feels streamlined.
* Most important – the program length (my major and degree length), definitely the benefits info, knowing how much is covered, I didn’t even click these…school costs and calendar…huh quarters…oh interesting. So I guess this school calendar is…the user should know if the calendar is in semesters or quarters, but someone trying to get info, they wouldn’t know this. I don’t know if that would matter if you could put both on here? Maybe that would just clutter it to me. Program accreditation, private or public because I prefer public. I don’t think school locations would matter to me. And contact information – those would be the most important to me.
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of finding more information about University of Notre Dame? Very easy since a lot of it is on this page and it just flows. I think it is easy. It’s a lot of information so I’d have to read it. I realize the more webistes you click, the deeper the rabbit hole. I don’t need to take a break.
* What types of information would be important to you in looking for a school?

**Second Task: Covering Expenses - 10 minutes**

You've noticed that the GI Bill won't fully cover the tuition at **University of Notre Dame**. You've heard that some schools offer the Yellow Ribbon program, which offers additional financial assistance to GI Bill beneficiaries. How would you use the Comparison Tool to see if **University of Notre Dame** offers the Yellow Ribbon program?

Follow-up: Do you think you would be eligible for the program? If so, how much of the remaining expenses do you think would be covered?

**Things to watch for:**

* Where does the user look to find the Yellow Ribbon program?
* Does the user see the Yellow Ribbon program listed under EYB?
* Does the user find the Yellow Ribbon calculation in EYB?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of discovering what financial assistance is offered by University of Notre Dame?
* If you finished researching University of Notre Dame and thought the school was the right fit for you, what would be your next step?

**Third Task: Compare Religious Schools - 10 minutes**

* You're interested in taking a few classes on religion and you're curious what schools in the **Notre Dame** area might have a religious affiliation. You know that **University of Notre Dame** is a Roman Catholic institution. How would you use the Comparison Tool to find schools in **Notre Dame, IN** that have a religious affiliation and see how they compare against **University of Notre Dame**?

I would go back…and search by location instead. Typed in notre dame and clicked autocomplete. If I want to be in that city, I’d do a smaller range…see these schools. I see right up top, it says Roman Catholic…

Scrolled down to footer…oh I see….scroll and see the other. So I see that so they do have the Chicago campus on here and the Washington campus but it says .2 miles away, so that’s confusing. Is it using the location of Notre Dame…that’s a little confusing. Since those are different cities, I would probably ignore them. Holy Cross…and Saint Mary’s…good to know its Woman-only…maybe if I don’t identify as a Woman I wouldn’t want to go there…

Bethel University, so I do see a religious affiliation…Missionary Church Inc, don’t know what that is. Also I don’t know how far away…oh 2.6 miles.

My next step would be to hit the compare box….clicked a few of them. I will start off with 3…oh it only lets you do 3….I see Compare institutions (3 of 3)…just to see what happens, I want to see what it does. Clicked something….nothing, maybe if a pop-up appears telling you that. I didn’t even look down here. Now I’ll click the up arrow…maybe once you click the compare box if it popped up automatically and you can see you can oly choose 3. And I would hit Compare. And here we go…Comparison Tool.

I like this highlight differences button…clicked it. I noticed that, it’s in a different order than I clicked it…its in alphabetical order. In my head, I assume it would be the order I clicked it in. Oh nice, its fixed (sticky header), that’s great. See the accreditations there, GI Bill students…then you can know if there are other people who can relate to your experience. If you go to Holy Cross you might never run into anyone…more likely in Notre Dame. See all 3 are religious. Can see tuition and fees…I don’t know if it would be tricky to add…I’ll keep scrolling to see…I wonder if there is a way to change the benefit you use or if the other benefits are listed as well. If you use MGIB, it doesn’t cover any of it. Having the option to change that would be nice. Length of VET TEC programs, I don’t remembere seeing this on the info page of the university of Notre Dame, but it is here…maybe I just missed it? Maybe it would be good to have on the individual school pages since its listed here. Credit for military training – this wouldn’t matter too much for me, but it can be nice to transfer military transcripts over. Also Yellow ribbon…not sure what principles of excellence is…that’s throwing me off. 8 keys…that’s throwing me off too. TA, some people are using that. I think that’s definitely useful…

Change benefit – where expect to do it? Initially I was thinking of having a dropdown button, maybe if you click which benefit you want to compare that would be nice. I assume most religious are private colleges…but its doesn’t have whether its private or public…I think that would be nice to have that listed as well.

I do click breadcrumb – would it have erased the inputs? I don’t have any expectations for that…I know sometimes when you hit the back arrow, it erases everything. I would definitely prefer it to still be there. So that’s still there (EYB) that’s good. Clicking through EYB…maybe another section would be if it offers any online classes, especially now. So looking for an online option.

I guess this learn more for Principles of Excellence would be nice….and maybe also 8 keys for Vet success.

**Things to watch for:**

* Where on the tool does the user go to find religious schools?
* Does the user see/say anything about the religious affilation in the header?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went? It was easy, definitely was – everything was side by side and it wasn’t too much, however, there also wasn’t any personalization there. It was just the general info. Maybe to just have if it was private or public and change which benefit you were using.
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of comparing schools with religious affiliations? 1

Being able to change benefits, where? So basically maybe here (compare institutions) or even…yeah, I guess that’s where I would expect it. Like choose benefit options somewhere in this general area (compare drawer) Or maybe once you click it, show the top 3 ones (benefits?) that are used…that might add a little more. Having separate sections for each one (benefit money – tuition, GI bill pays, out of pocket). Or have an option to click before starting to compare

School had online classes, where info live? I saw it on the school profile page, but missed it on the comparison page. I can go back there…I think its an Academics, education details…would that be a good one? Hmm….so in the academics or school locations? Sometimes you do associate those two things…I’m leaning more towards academics.

**Thank-You and Closing - X minutes**

Well we really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us today. Your feedback is so helpful to us as we continue to work on the site and make sure it really works for Veterans.

Thanks! Lastly, do you know any other Veterans, caregivers, or service members who might be willing to participate in a future user research session? If Yes: Thank you! I'll have our team send you an email with a little blurb that you can pass along.

Great, well thank you so much again, and enjoy the rest of your day!